

THE TOWN OF FORT MYERS BEACH, FLORIDA
HISTORIC DETERMINATION PROCESS
AND COTTAGE DESIGN TRADITION

The town and Historic Preservation Board encourages preservation of our history by determining the importance of historic structures, properties and districts, identifying them with plaques, and encouraging the tradition of cottage design. This brochure will assist those who seek to apply for a determination of historic importance for a structure/property within the program, as well as those who seek to utilize cottage design as they remodel or redevelop structures in that tradition.

HISTORY OF FORT MYERS BEACH COTTAGE DESIGN

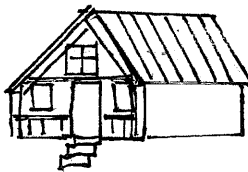
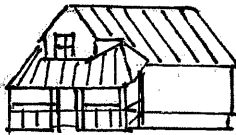
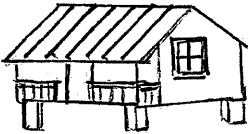
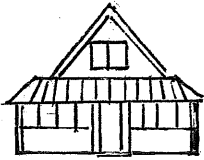
Early homesteaders settled on Estero Island in the late 1800's, many in fishing shacks. By the 1930's cottages were built as second homes for winter visitors. The dredging of bayside canals provided additional waterfront lots, with hotels, dance halls, casinos and restaurants built as island attractions. Schools, churches and other commercial structures were built as the island population grew.

Most early cottages were of the wood frame vernacular - simple and small scale to minimize the transport of materials from the mainland. They were designed for comfort and practicality in our subtropical climate at a time prior to running water, air conditioning and insect control. Airflow through the cottage was maximized by large window openings, louvered shutters, high ceilings, and ceiling fans. Airflow underneath was encouraged by elevation on piers or pilings with lattice skirting. Shade was created by covered porches, wide eaves, and well-placed landscaping. Interior walls and floors were insect and mold resistant wood. Roofs were usually gable or hip, covered in pressed tin shingles or sheet metal. Gutters, rain barrels and cisterns captured rainwater. Siding was wood, later replaced by asbestos shingles after the 1944 hurricane. Fireplaces provided heat if needed, and were sometimes decorated with local shell or coral rock.

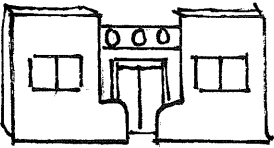
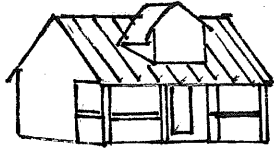
Early structures faced destruction by storms or the development of high-rise condominiums. Due to the sensitivity of our community, many historic buildings remain standing. While precise identification of the style and importance of some structures can be difficult if they have been enlarged or updated, variations serve to illustrate the evolution of our community's cottage style over time and contribute to the feeling of an historic district.

HISTORIC STRUCTURE DETERMINATION: The Historic Preservation Board will determine the category of historic importance (CHI) of each structure in accordance with guidance from the Lee County Historic Preservation Guide and the Town's Land Development Code. Property owners are encouraged to apply for this determination. The basis for evaluation of structures and properties includes age, builder, location, function, architectural style/design, materials, archaeological potential and association with important events and people in our town history.

1. **Age:** When was structure built? Remodeled? By whom?
2. **Location/Setting:** Why was it built in that location? Was it significant about the setting? Has the structure been moved?
3. **Function:** Was the building designed as a school, church, residence or commercial structure? Has the use changed over time?
4. **Architectural Style/Design:** Is it of a distinctive type or method of construction? Does it possess high artistic value? Is the style identifiable from the following list and illustrations?



- a. **WOOD FRAME (FRAME VERNACULAR):** Functional wood frame building built for subtropical climate. Lacks stylistic detail. Generally rectangular, one or two story, with single-story porch.
- b. **PILING HOUSE:** Frame vernacular but elevated on wood pilings. Near water or in storm surge prone location.
- c. **BUNGALOW TYPE 1:** Hip roof over one or one-and one-half story with low dorm on façade and inset porch.
- d. **BUNGALOW TYPE 2:** Front facing gable roof. One or more gables on façade. One dominant gable often above a porch.

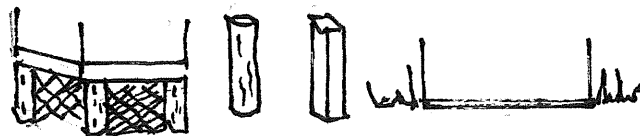


- e. **BUNGALOW TYPE 3:** Gable parallel to the street with a cross gable intersecting at 90 degrees.
- f. **BUNGALOW TYPE 4:** Large one and one-half story house with gable parallel to street incorporating a dormer. Porch inset under main roof supported by posts.
- g. **MEDITERRANEAN REVIVAL:** Arches, tile roof, stucco walls with niches and deep recessed openings.
- h. **MISSION:** Smooth or flat façade with little or no overhang, battered walls and rough textured stucco punctuated with window and door openings. Devoid of elaborate decoration. Rely on mass, arched openings clay tile roof and curvilinear parapets as features.
- i. **COMMERCIAL VERNACULAR:** Wood frame or concrete block. Simple and functional. False parapet for signage. Recessed storefront with covered sidewalk for access. Metal gable roof or flat composition material are most common.

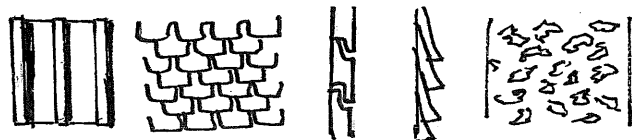
5. **Materials/Workmanship:** Identify the materials used in its construction and detail or visual character.
- a. Wood frame or block?



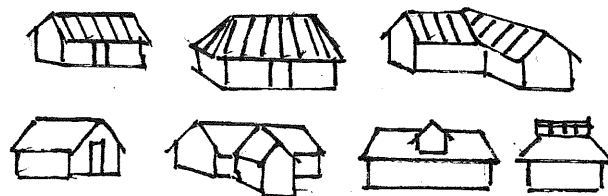
- b. Is the foundation pine pilings, treated posts, or slab? Is there lattice skirting?



- c. Is the exterior siding vertical board and batten, asbestos shingles, horizontal siding or stucco?



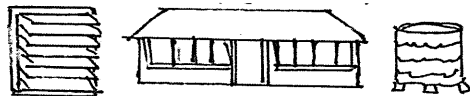
- d. What is the roof shape? Pitch? Flat? Material? Are there dormers, a widow's walk or cupola?



Top Row L to R: Side Gable, Hip, Cross Gable

Bottom L to R: Front Gable, Cross Gable, Dormer, Widow's Walk

- e. Are there original exterior features such as jalousie windows, grouped or paired window openings, shutters, rain barrel, cistern, balusters, landscaping or other early detail?



- f. Are there original interior details such as slash pine wood floors, pine paneling, fireplace, historic fixtures, shell details?
- g. **Association:** Is the structure associated with important events or people in the Town's history?
- h. **Archaeological Resource:** Have any artifacts been found on the site? Is there reason to believe there might be artifacts buried?

APPLICATION PROCESS FOR DETERMINATION OF CATEGORY OF HISTORIC IMPORTANCE AND HISTORIC PLAQUE PROGRAM

There are four Categories of Historic Importance (CHI1-4) identified by the Town of Fort Myers Beach in an effort to celebrate and preserve its history. Structures or properties with historic or archaeological importance qualify for identification in the historic plaque program. Property owners may apply for a determination by the Historic Preservation Board. Owners may request a pre-application appointment to discuss the historic preservation program, plaques, specifics of their structure/property, and the HPB application process by calling the FMB Department of Community Development at 330-765-0202. Is important to note that contributing historic structures/properties in categories CHI2, CHI3, CHI4 are encouraged, but *not* required, to maintain original historic features *Only property owners that specifically apply for, receive, and accept category CHI1 – Historic Recognition determination are subject to Land Development Code Historic Preservation Chapter 22 regulations and exemption from FEMA regulation.*

- CHI1 - HISTORIC DESIGNATION – meets requirements for County, State or National designation. Includes resources eligible for National register of Historic Places. May include archaeological importance or potential. LDC Chapter 22, Article II, Division 3 and Division 4 would apply only to this Category of Historical Importance.
- CHI2 - HISTORIC RECOGNITION – meet requirements for higher importance to social, education, religious, commercial, or tourism heritage
- CHI3 - HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE – includes structures that are located in and contribute to a historic district
- CHI4 - HISTORIC INTEREST – includes vistas and historic sites.

Applications are available through:
The Historic Preservation Board
C/O Department of Community Development
Town of Fort Myers Beach
2523 Estero Boulevard
Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931
Phone: 239-765-0202.

Thank you for celebrating the history of our island community
Through voluntary participation in the town's plaque program.

Together we can publicly identify our historic resources
and enjoy the unique character they contribute
to the Town of Fort Myers Beach.

May our combined efforts encourage
future generations to appreciate and preserve
the early structures that form the basis of
current development in our island community.